The Story of Eight Administrations

A Review. By JUDGE WILLARD BARTLETT.

FROM HARRISON TO HARDING. A PERSONAL NARRATIVE, COVERING A THIRD OF A CENTURY, 1888-1921. By Arthur Wallace Dunn. Two volumes. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

A WELL TRAINED journalist of ability and experience occupying the position of the Washington correspondent of an influential newspaper or group of newspapers must needs enjoy exceptional opportunities for observing and recording the activities of the public men who make the history of the country, as one Presidential administration succeeds another. The author of these volumes is such a journalist. Born in Minnesota, he began newspaper work on the Grand Forks *Plaindealer* in North Dakota in 1883; four years later he became city editor of the well known St. Paul *Pioneer-Press*, and in 1889 he went to Washington as the correspondent of that journal and the Portland *Oregonian*. From 1893 to 1906 he had charge of the Congressional report of the Associated Press, and since 1898 he has contributed daily letters from Washington to the American Press Association. To be a first rate Washington correspondent a man must possess a sense of humor and have access to the most exclusive society in the national capital. That Mr. Dunn is qualified for his position in both of these respects may be inferred from the fact that he has been president of the famous Gridiron Club, whose distinguishing function it is to make fun of the great men of the country at its annual banquets, and from his membership in the Chevy Chase Club, the most exclusive country club in Washington.

The present work is a personal narrative of political life in the Capitol and at the White House under six Presidents: Benjamin Harrison, Grover Cleveland, William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, William H. Taft and Woodrow Wilson. Mr. Dunn has known them all well and some of them intimately. He assures us that he has tried to write of them as an unprejudiced observer, all the more because people are not always just to the men they elect to the high office of President. "Of the six men who have been Presidents during the thirty-two years ending March 4, 1921, only one," he tells us, "escaped the innuendoes of slanderous whisperings concerning their morality." This is worse than we had supposed, but, as Mr. Dunn adds, it is indeed a cheering and significant fact that none of these whisperings has ever caused the people to lose confidence in their Presidents. "Wherever a President has been rebuked by the people it has been on account of his policies and acts as President and not for personal reasons."

Benjamin Harrison became President just as the nation celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of the adoption of the Federal Constitution. Mrs. Cleveland attended the ceremonies of that celebration in New York, at which President Harrison was the most prominent figure, in the same fine spirit which she showed at Washington in maintaining the brilliancy of the entertainments at the White House to the very end of her husband's Administration. Neither she, nor Mr. Cleveland, nor any member of his Cabinet manifested any sense of disappointment at his defeat.

The physical contrast between Cleveland and Harrison was very striking on the day of the inauguration. Cleveland was big, strong and robust; his successor was undersized, rather delicate looking and wore his iron gray beard "in such a fashion as to give a concave appearance to his face." The latter peculiarity gave a sardonic expression to President Harrison's features, which did not accord with his true character. We believe Mr. Dunn is the first observer to call attention to it. The campaign caricatures which pictured the Republican candidate in his "Grandfather's Hat," a furry tile many times too big for him, were also misleading; for, as Mr. Dunn says, Benjamin Harrison was a much abler man than his grandfather, President William Henry Harrison. "His unfortunate manner was his greatest drawback; he appeared suspicious of people; was non-committal in conversation, and would do the right thing in the wrong way." As Senator Evarts said, when asked what kind of a candidate he would make: "Oh, Harrison's a good Republican and one of the foremost lawyers in the country; but he has no bowels of compassion!" By this his hearers understood him to mean that Harrison would appeal to the intellect of the voters rather than to their imagination, and such was undoubtedly a correct forecast. Harrison's strictness in the observance of Sunday surpassed that of any other President, so far as is known. When he had planned to set out on a long journey on Sunday night he would not start a minute before midnight. "The train would be made up and waiting, all arrangements had to be made by the railroad employees on Sunday, but the President would not leave the White House till after the midnight hour."

The Fifty-first Congress, which assembled in 1889, was notable not only for the distinction of its members, but for what is accomplished. "It was the Congress of the McKinley tariff, the Sherman anti-trust law, the silver purchase law, the Reed rules counting a quorum (in spite of refusal of members present to answer the roll call), of the billion dollars of expenditures, of large pension increases and of land legislation which resulted in the great system of forest reserves and the beginning of the conservation movement." Three future Presidents now entered the field of national politics. William McKinley, as Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means and majority leader of the House of Representatives; Theodore Roosevelt, as a Civil Service Commissioner of the United States, and William H. Taft, as Solicitor-General, the law officer of the Department of Justice, next in rank to the Attorney-General. "Of Taft," we are told, "little was known outside of Ohio, where he had been a Judge in one of the smaller courts." This statement reads strangely, when we reflect that the same man is now Chief Justice of the United States; yet it was true enough, and "the smaller court" was the Superior Court of Cincinnati. Mr. James M. Beck, whose speeches and writings were so serviceable to the cause of the Entente allies during the great war, now occupies the position to which Judge Taft was first appointed under the Federal Government. Mr. Dunn first met Theodore Roosevelt shortly after he became Civil Service Commissioner; and the interview is worth remembering as disclosing his own ideas concerning his future career. "He was in one of the dingy little rooms," says Mr. Dunn, "then occupied by the commission. Sitting at a desk he stared at me through large tortoise shell rimmed glasses.

"'Well, sir; what can I do for you?' he asked, with his usual abruptness.

"'Oh, nothing much,' I replied. 'I'm from Dakota.'

"'You are!' he shouted. 'Come in! sit down! Put your feet on the table!'

"And then we had a long gabfest about the Territory soon to become two States.

"A few months later I wrote a little story about Roosevelt, for he was always good for a story, and quoted him as to his ambitions and aspirations. 'If I have a career,' he said at that time, 'it will be in literature rather than in politics.'"

This declaration was prophetic of his aptitude for the literature of adventurous travel, hunting and natural history; in which his achievements would have sufficed to win him distinction even if he had attempted nothing in any other field of endeavor.

As a result of the election of 1892, Cleveland returned to the White House in the following year, with a strong Cabinet, in which Daniel S. Lamont, formerly the President's private secretary, was Secretary of War. Mr. Dunn says he was a great aid to the President's policy of secrecy concerning the doings of the Administration; so that the only imprudent remark which he let fall from his lips during his four years in the War Department was the declaration, "General Miles is a newspaper soldier!" Early in Cleveland's second term the British Minister at Washington was raised to the rank of Ambassador, whereupon Thomas F. Bayard of Delaware, our Minister to Great Britain, was likewise promoted and became the first Ambassador from the United States to a foreign country. By reason of his advancement, Sir Julian Pauncefote, the British Ambassador, became dean of the Diplomatic Corps at Washington in place of Baron Fava, the Minister from Italy, whose designation as Ambassador came later. Mr. Dunn says the Baron was an interesting character, of an economical turn of mind. "His home and household cost him little and he never made any great display. The State Department uses a distinctive kind of paper for its diplomatic correspondence. Usually it is quite generous and notes to embassies and legations, when occupying only a few lines, are sent on double sheets, the last two pages of which are blank. Baron Fava would carefully divide these blank sheets from the State Department notes and write his replies upon them. The State Department officials could easily recognize their own paper when thus returned."

Gov. Hill was sent to the Senate from New York during President Cleveland's second term and soon won the respect of his associates by his careful attention to his duties and his skill in debate. "No man was Hill's equal as a debater," says Mr. Dunn, "while he was in the Senate." So accurate was his memory that his colleague, Edward Murphy of Troy, said Hill could reproduce the proceedings of the Senate for an entire legislative day if they should happen to be destroyed. One of the noteworthy events of this period was the sensation occasioned by the alleged march of a so-called army of unemployed laboring men toward Washington under the leadership of one Jacob S. Coxey. According to Mr. Dunn, "Coxey's army was created by newspaper men, who had been fooled into believing that such a movement had really been set on foot in Ohio. When they found out their mistake they 'wrote it up' just the same until an "army" was actually created and on the march until it was disbanded on the steps of the Capitol when Coxey was arrested for disobeying the sign directing visitors to keep off the grass.

The other administrations reviewed in these two volumes are considered and discussed in the same manner as those of Harrison and Cleveland. The author enjoyed the privilege of personal acquaintance with almost all the public men of any note in the successive periods covered by his narrative, and innumerable anecdotes have come to his ears concerning many of them. He tells these stories well, and his chapters read like instructive and entertaining conversations with a good talker who knows everything worth knowing about life in Washington during the last quarter of a century. Mr. Dunn's work is especially valuable as preserving a record of numerous noteworthy incidents which might otherwise be forgotten. Many of these have never been told before.

One other most commendable feature of Mr. Dunn's interesting work requires to be noticed. This is the admirable estimate of the character and achievements of Elihu Root, contained in Chapter xxiii. of Volume II., entitled "The Man of the Hour." Personal considerations forbid the present writer from saying more on this subject than to express his pleasure at finding a competent critic of our recent public life able and willing to do justice to one who deserves so well of his country.

Oriental Philosophy

TERTIUM ORGANUM. By P. D. Ouspenshy. Alffed A. Knopf.

THE relationship between Ouspensky and Bragdon, his translator, parallels that between Darwin and Wallace. When Onspensky became a refugee from the Bolsheviki he carried with him one of Bragdon's books. In the chaos which followed the war Ouspensky disappeared from sight as completely as if he had entered the unknown world which he was trying to explore. At that time Claude Bragdon translated the Tertium Organum. Ouspensky was destitute in Constantinople among the many Russian refugees. He established communication with his American translators and the English translation was shown him. He was satisfied, so well satisfied with it that he says: "This translation, made without my knowledge and participation, at a time when I was cut off by war and revolution from the civilized world, transmits my thought so exactly that after a very attentive review of the book I could only find one word to correct."

Ouspensky is attempting to widen the boundaries of human knowledge. His title challenges comparison with the "Organon" of Aristotle, and the "Novum Organum" of Bacon. He gives the book a substitute, "A Key to the Enigmas of the World."

He shows first that modern science cannot solve certain mysteries, and is becoming more and more uncertain. He adopts Hinton's statement that "Space is the instrument of the mind," and postulates that "Matter is as much an abstract conception as are truth, good and evil." When we seek to analyze time in its flight we are confronted with the blank enigma of the Eternal Now.

Ouspensky tries to explain the fourth dimension by showing how inadequately inhabitants of a two dimensional world would conceive of three dimensions. The third dimension would seem movement to them. Hence they would conceive it as time. Ouspensky believes that men of cosmic consciousness will free themselves of the illusions caused by our present conceptions. He says: "We must throw off the chains of our logic. This is the first, the great, the chief liberation toward which humanity must strive." Onspensky's book stimulates thought in urging it to return to the mysticism of the early church and the older philosophies of the Orient.